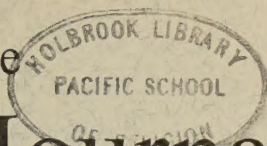


The



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The Revd. D. A. Christadoss is assuming the duties of Business Manager on the Editorial Board, in place of Mr. Mathew P. John, who is leaving for the United States shortly. The *Journal* is very greatly indebted to Mr. John for all his work as a member of the Editorial Board over the last five years, in particular for his work as Business Manager.

Editorial Notes

The current issue (February 1960) of *Church Union : News and Views* reports progress in the action of negotiating bodies towards approval of the *Plan of Church Union in North India and Pakistan*. This Plan, in its third edition, was sent to them in April 1957 for their decision. Readers may be reminded that there are, in all, seven bodies directly concerned with these negotiations. Each of these bodies has its own constitutional procedure to be followed in taking a decision as momentous as the acceptance of such a Plan. It appears however that, of the seven, three have now taken the essential first step towards approval.

The Methodist Church (British and Australian Conferences) was the first to report such a move as long ago as 1958. Their vote will come up for ratification probably within a year. In the meantime, they have further recorded the opinion that they would prefer Union to proceed on the basis of the Plan as it stands, though they would not rule out consideration of amendments if such appeared to be absolutely necessary to others.

In November 1959, the General Assembly of the United Church of Northern India, by a large majority, accepting the recommendation of its Church Union Committee, declared its opinion that the U.C.N.I. may 'enter on a wider union on the basis . . . set out . . . without endangering the evangelical principles for which this Church stands'. The General Assembly also gave due notice of its intention to proceed with the Plan so as to merge the identity of the U.C.N.I. with those other bodies which accept it. This notice will call for ratification at the next meeting of the General Assembly (normally in 1962) and thereafter, if confirmed by the requisite majority in the Church Councils, the U.C.N.I. can go forward. In the meantime the Plan is before all the Councils for their opinion.

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In January 1960, the General Council of the Church of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon, with due deliberation, adopted a resolution of 'general approval' of the Plan and referred it to Diocesan Councils for consideration and the passing of resolutions of general approval or disapproval. The General Council also requested His Grace the Metropolitan to refer the Plan to other Provinces in the Anglican Communion, so as to secure their judgement on the question of whether or not they would be in full communion with the united Churches from their inauguration.

These actions open the way to a possible final verdict also in three years' time.

While these actions have been taken by three negotiating bodies, the response of the others is still awaited. During 1959 it was understood that the Methodist Church of Southern Asia would be likely to press for certain amendments before they would proceed to a vote. It is learned, however, that at the meeting of the Negotiating Committee which was held in Jabalpur in December 1959, the request for amendments was withdrawn. This took place after intimation from the Anglican delegation that they would not press for the more far-reaching of certain amendments which they had wished to make, but would request only certain changes, mainly in the Proposed Services, which the Committee approved as not affecting the substance of the Plan. It appears that there has been some delay in the M.C.S.A. beginning to follow their constitutional procedure for a decision, but it seems that the way is now clear for them also to initiate the necessary action.

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As regards the Baptist Churches, it was made clear at the Negotiating Committee, that the statements in the Plan (particularly in the Appendix on the subject) regarding the administration of two alternative practices for Baptism were not regarded as fully satisfactory. As a result, the earlier Baptist recommendation that voting should go forward on the Third Edition as it stands was replaced with a request for a re-opening of some of the issues involved. The Negotiating Committee did not see its way to consider any amendments to the Plan, but asked its sub-committee, already appointed for this purpose, to make a further study of the Appendix concerned with a view to some possible clarification which would help. It is reported that the Baptist Churches in Pakistan have decided not to proceed with the Plan of Union, but the decision of the Council of Baptist Churches in North India, as that of the Disciples and the Church of the Brethren, is still awaited.

Finally we must observe that both the U.C.N.I. and the C.I.P.B.C., in taking their actions, have made public statements of their interpretation of the significance of the proposed act of Unification of the Ministries. Such statements seem to be felt necessary largely to reassure a wider public which might fear that, in entering Union, the Churches concerned had surrendered some vital principles. The statements themselves do not form part of the Plan of Union, which is a Plan for Union by Comprehension which seeks to make room for the heritage of all the negotiating bodies.

The Relevance of the Doctrine of Justification for the Church in India*

J. KUMARESAN

JUSTIFICATION IN CHRISTIAN FAITH

The word 'Justification' is a very common word and sometimes used in such a common way that the deepest intentions of the word are hardly realized. It is a word that has gained the attention of generations from Biblical times. Strictly speaking it has been the centre of the Biblical message that God is Lord and we are the sheep of His pasture. It stands primarily for the relationship God bears to man and the meaning of this relationship for man's life and destiny. The central idea in this Biblical setting points undoubtedly to the very nature and understanding of God. God is not to be understood in terms of philosophical categories as the absolute being, neither is He to be understood in terms of absolute or naked majesty. The picture of God behind the doctrine of justification is that of one who is active and living in a relationship. God's love stands for an activity that is always channelled in His relationship with man. In other words, justification thinks not so much of God's nature in the abstract as His activity of love in the concrete.

To this Biblical message the Reformation brought deeper insights which gather relevance because of the different shades of clouds that passed over the understanding and presentation of the gospel. The psychological situations of the Reformers and the experiential development of their personalities played no insignificant role in their discovery and exposition of the doctrine of justification. Luther's psychological struggles in the midst of an acute sense of moral imperfection drove him to the realization that the answer to this situation is not to be found in moral excellence, but rather to be understood and appropriated in terms of

*A paper presented at the Lutheran World Federation Theological Conferences in Oxford and Germany during summer 1959.

the forgiving and condescending love of God. That is to say, the true answer to life's quest is not to be found in what happens to man, but rather what happens to God when He meets man as he is. God's heart moves and acts and in this dynamic action the holy and righteous God clothes sinful man with His own holiness and righteousness.

The doctrine of justification became important for another reason as well. The understanding of the gospel began to have a more determined influence in relating the gospel to proclamation and preaching as well. The interrelation and the interaction between these two refer to the core of justification. To think of the gospel without the obligation to proclaim the word of the gospel makes for a gospel that is not the good news, or to proclaim the gospel for the sake of human satisfaction or for any other reason without its reference to God's action is to make the gospel meaningless and ineffective. The two belong together and the right understanding of their relation will help towards a true understanding of the meaning of justification as God's spontaneous activity and victory over the lives of His creatures in this world.

It is, however, not an easy task to understand the true implications of the doctrine of justification in our modern times. The modern man has very different presuppositions which lie at the roots of his life and world views. In the light of the scientific and technological developments, he is inclined to seek more and more the strength for his life in self-reliance. The importance gained through all these advancements has been intensified by the increasing recognition of great potential powers man is able to wield. Such a self-reliance is evident in three important concerns of the modern man: (1) for existence, (2) for preservation and (3) for extinction. The one search is for security and man seems to seek in a very determined manner strongholds for his own existence. Such a resolute determination to strengthen the foundations of existence is strongest today. As a result there is an increasing preoccupation with categories that promote the security of life and all social, economic and even religious concerns are ultimately nothing other than a fundamental concern for human existence. Secondly, existence in itself is meaningless without the effort to preserve and perpetuate it. In this concern we observe in clear and unmistakable terms the vast competition and struggle in the various spheres of human activity—in industry and commerce, in medical discoveries, in technological achievements. Finally the preoccupation with human existence and its preservation does include an inevitable attitude to the end of life. In the midst of many attitudes what is most common to the modern man is an expectation of natural extinction of life. That life must end must be counted upon and there is nothing more to be said about the same.

In the context of such preoccupations it is necessary to reconsider the meaning and relevance of the doctrine of justification. The soil in which the doctrine grew at the time of the Reformation

is not the same soil we find today. In the present-day context, when life moves under very different conditions, one can ask how far the Christian claim can be expressed in terms of justification. Humanly speaking in the secular world there seems to be no proper qualifications for an understanding of such a doctrine. Yet this does not exclude its meaning and relevance for today. Because justification stands for something quite the opposite of man's search and presuppositions, it has a missionary task to point to the centre outside of man's own sphere of activity and achievement. It is evident that the traditional language and phraseology in which this doctrine has been clothed and presented may not have a direct relevance today, but this very fact makes us seriously face the challenge to think of the new thought forms in which the abiding central truth of God's action in love is to be channelled. Such a task can be fruitfully and successfully performed only when the Christian gospel is able to be presented in the total conviction that God is Lord of the world and the Lordship of God in Christ means in a real and true sense a lordship over the whole humanity.

JUSTIFICATION IN CHURCH LIFE

In the previous section we have seen the central place the doctrine of justification occupies in Christian faith for a true understanding of God and man. It is important to let God be God and man be man. Only in this way can we understand the meaning of justification, its centre being rooted in God's relation to man. We have also to ask the question frankly: What does the doctrine of justification mean in practice for those who are within the walls of the Church, that is, as far as their life and witness are concerned? It must be stated at the outset that the traditional language and thought forms used to present this doctrine presents some difficulties and it is our task to steer clear in such a way that the message of salvation will not only be understood properly, but that its power also will be evidenced in the practical life of the believers. The historical situation in which Luther reacted to existing conditions of his times is not quite identical with the situation in the Younger Churches today, although this is not to deny that the central truths of the Reformation have an abiding relevance in one way or another. The impression is created in Lutheran and non-Lutheran circles that the excessive indulgence in the exclusive objective reality implied in justification in Luther's theology needs to be understood and used in quite a different way. The other side of the question, namely, an equal emphasis on the relation of this theocentric approach to the needs of man, in just his situation, needs to be supplemented. This may be an erroneous way of understanding and interpreting Luther, but yet we see the influence of Lutheranism rather than Luther himself in somewhat misleading lines. To put it differently, we may say that for Christian life and witness in the Younger

Churches a simple and clear correlation of justification and sanctification would be of practical value. Failure to recognize this correlation between the reality of justification and its impact on a justified life leads to two different consequences. One is to belittle the demands that lie behind the Christian life in respect of a sanctified personal life, and the other is to develop an attitude of indifference to face the impact of justification on the concerns of human life—social, economic and political. The former attitude has serious repercussions for a Christian witness in a non-Christian world and the other has equally serious repercussions for the development of a healthy national life.

In the life of the Younger Churches there is a growing need for viewing the total life and witness of the Churches in terms of *Una Sancta*. The formation of the Church of South India in 1947 has laid the burden of Church Union heavily on the part of all Younger Churches. In the context of the Lutheran Churches in India, the Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India has always taken the stand that this vital question of relations with non-Lutheran Churches is not a matter of individual concern of the Churches but it has rather wished to enter into conversations with the C.S.I. as a Lutheran unit in order to serve the cause in a more objective way and whatever way the negotiations may lead the Churches, there will be the consciousness that the Lutheran Churches have together faced the issue as a common task in obedience to the call of God in this new and challenging situation. For eight years there have been theological conversations between representatives of the C.S.I. and the Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India. Papers presented and the subjects discussed have been numerous and these are available in print. As a result of these discussions Agreed Statements have been issued on *the Law and the Gospel, the Doctrine of Election, the Relation of Doctrinal and Confessional Statements to the Being of the Church, Baptism, the Lord's Supper* and on *the Church and the Ministry*. Although these Agreed Statements are only a few, they must be viewed in the total context of the several important issues carefully and thoroughly discussed and therefore these serve as not only important documents conveying the common ground gained in doctrinal matters, but they also serve as signs of the common task that has bound the two large sections in South India, much concern having been directed for reaching unity in faith. To quote from one of the Agreed Statements: 'Agreement regarding the basic doctrines which are of the essence of the Gospel is the prerequisite of union between Churches. Nevertheless the basis for the unity of the Church is oneness in the Lord Himself. The responsibility for deciding in any particular case whether the necessary doctrinal agreement exists rests upon the living Church as led by the Holy Spirit (*Unity in Faith and Life*, C.L.S., 1955, p. 17). It is interesting to note the part played by the Lutheran section in determining the Agreed Statements. The C.S.I. has at every stage appreciated the central contribution

through the understanding of the justification by faith, although at very many points the Lutherans had to use not the traditional language, but new terms to describe the meanings and intentions that lie behind this theocentric aspect of God's revelation and its relation to man. The total outcome can be expressed in the firm affirmation that the centrality of the doctrine had not only been recognized but it permeates the common understanding of the Agreed Statements based on a serious confrontation with the Word of God.

It may be interesting to mention at this point what the two Churches say about the relation of doctrinal and confessional statements of the Being of the Church. The Agreed Statement begins: 'God has revealed Himself to us, and the centre of that revelation is His saving act in Jesus Christ. This revelation of Himself is the reality which the Church seeks to express in words in its creeds and confessions of faith' (*Ibid.*, p. 15). This is an important aspect as we have to bear in mind that the confessions have a place of significance only in so far as they point to the central reality of God's revelation and atonement in Christ. With regard to the purpose and nature of these confessional statements the Agreed Statement continues: 'As the Church seeks to confess what it believes and to safeguard it from misunderstanding or distortion, it must use human language, but must always remember that human language is necessarily inadequate to express the fullness of God's revelations.' 'The use of creeds and confessions to guide Christians into deeper experience and to preserve the essentials of the Christian message is, in principle, sound and scriptural.' 'All creeds and confessions are subordinate standards subject to the authority of the Word of God' (*Ibid.*).

The *Lutheran World* (Vol. V, No. 4) carries an article: Confessions and Churches—an Afro-Asian Symposium, edited by Dr. Arne Sovik. It compiles together the various answers received from African and Asian leaders to a questionnaire sent out to them. What interests us now is one of the questions regarding the place of the Lutheran Confessions in the faith of the Younger Churches. The question reads as follows: In your opinion are the present Lutheran Confessions adequate for your Church? If so, how can they be brought to bear upon the life and theology of your Church? What status do they have in your Church, officially and in actual fact? The answers reveal in general the scanty recognition given to the Lutheran Confessions in the life and theology of the Younger Churches. There may be various reasons for this. It is partly explainable on the grounds that the language and expression of these Confessions have their roots in their historical situations and no attempt has been made to relate them in an effective way for an understanding of truths in the various vernaculars used today. It may partly be due to the hesitation that in the context of efforts to come together in forming one united Church such denominational confessions tend to make

unity more difficult because of the particular angle of thought and interpretation dictated by certain specific historical conditions. Whatever may be the legitimate reason the general attitude at least in India could be stated in the words quoted in the article: 'The present Lutheran Confessions do provide an adequate basis for the preservation of the Christian faith . . . but this is not to say that every word and every formulation should be mechanically adhered to at the cost of the need to interpret the meaning and spirit of the confessions in the language and thought forms of our country. This would, however, become the growing need of every living and active Church' (p. 371).

What does Justification mean to the Lutheran Churches in India? The answer to this is found in the Doctrinal statement presenting the confessional basis of the Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India, 1951, where the following points are made under the heading: Justification by Faith (p. 9).

1. Moved by compassion and willing man's redemption, God sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world.¹ By his incarnation Christ became our brother,² and identified Himself so completely with humanity³ that He took upon Himself all the consequences of man's sin.⁴ By His vicarious life, death, resurrection, and ascension, Jesus atoned for all sin, won the victory over sin, death and the devil, and thereby achieved man's salvation.⁵
2. Through and because of this work of Christ and His righteousness, God has removed the curse on man¹; therefore He no longer imputes sin,² but offers His forgiveness to all men and is now ready and willing to receive sinners into His sonship.³
3. When God offers this grace to man in His Gospel,¹ and the sinner accepts this grace in faith, God justifies him and restores him to full sonship.
4. Faith is the trust of our hearts in God's grace and in the salvation wrought by Him through Christ.¹ It is the work of God's Holy Spirit in our heart through the Gospel.² In this complete work of God lies the sure foundation of our faith, and therefore we can have complete certainty of our salvation.³

¹ Jn. 3:16; 1 Jn. 2:2.

² Heb. 2:11, 14-15.

³ Heb. 4:15; Rom. 8:3.

⁴ Gal. 4:4f.

⁵ Eph. 1:3ff.; Rom. 5:19; Gal. 1:4.

¹ Gal. 3:13.

² 2 Cor. 5:19, 21; Rom. 5:18.

³ Gal. 4:5.

¹ Rom. 1:17; 3:22 (F.C. Epit. 111, 5-6; Sol. Decl. 111, 22).

¹ (F.C. Epit. 111, 6; Sol. Decl. 111, 11).

² (F.V. Sol. Decl. 111, 10).

³ (F.C. Sol. Decl. 111, 30).

5. It follows that God, looking upon our faith, declares us righteous not because faith would constitute a merit or an act of co-operation on our part, but because that faith trusts solely in what God has done in Christ.¹

¹ Rom. 3:24, 28; 5:1f.; 11:6.
(F.B. Sol. Decl. 111, 13, 30-31).

The following points are made under the heading: Christian Life and Obedience, the Fruit of Faith, which is the part dealing with the sanctification as the sequel to justification.

1. The state of sonship is a present possession which we have and hold in its completeness as long as we continue in faith.
2. This faith is in itself a new life and power in our hearts,¹ and by its very nature brings forth a holy life and good works.² Faith is a busy, living, and powerful thing, continually active in deeds of love.³ These fruits of faith, however, do not give to faith its saving power. We are not saved through good works, but to do good work.⁴
3. The Holy Spirit changes the heart of the believer¹ and continually leads him to struggle against sin² by daily contrition and repentance: his former manner of life will be changed. Faith enables him to overcome temptations, because it gives him a new will that is in conformity with God's will (sanctification).
4. Sanctification grows naturally out of faith, and is necessary because it is in accordance with God's will.¹ The Holy Spirit has converted us for the purpose of living under Christ in true holiness.² Thus in the life of the believer all deeds which proceed from the proper motive, the love of Christ,³ and conform to the holy will of God will be a service well-pleasing to God. Since these requirements are lacking in the unbeliever, he can do no works that are pleasing to God.⁴

¹ 1 Cor. 5:17.

² Gal. 5:6.

³ 1 Thess. 1:3.

⁴ Eph. 2:8-10.
(F.C. Epit. IV. 11;
Sol. Decl. IV. 10).

¹ Gal. 5, 24f.

(Apol. Art. iii 2, 4).

² Rom. 6, 12ff.; 8, 13;
Eph. 4:22; 2 Cor.
7:1; 1 John 3:3.

¹ Matt. 3:8; Gal. 5:8.

² Titus 2:14; Matt.
5:16.

³ 1 John 4:19.

⁴ Heb. 11:6.

5. The incentive to good works is Christ's love,¹ which dwells in us and constrains us to love Him and for His sake to love our neighbour and all men.²
 - ¹ 2 Cor. 5:14.
 - ² 2 Rom. 13:10.
6. The new life which the believer leads is a living sacrifice¹ of thanksgiving for mercies received.² It is by no means a sacrifice by which man atones for past transgressions.³
 - ¹ Rom. 12:1.
 - ² Heb. 13:15, 16.
 - ³ Luke 17:10.
(F.C. Epit. II, 12).
7. We are justified and thus living a life in sanctification, but according to our old nature we are still sinners.¹ Yet sin, having no place in our new life,² is combated and mortified in daily repentance and faith.
 - ¹ Isa. 64:6; Phil. 3:12; Rom. 7:14-24.
 - ² Rom. 6:14; 1 Cor. 9:21.
(F.C. Epit. IV. 10-11: VI. 2ff.).
8. The life in Christ, if it is healthy,¹ is bound to grow in holiness² unto the full measure of the stature of Christ.³
 - ¹ Titus 1:13.
 - ² Gal. 5:16; 1 Thess. 4:1, 3; Heb. 12:14; 1 Peter 1, 15f.
 - ³ Eph. 4:13-16.

What appears in both the above headings, namely, JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH and CHRISTIAN LOVE AND OBEDIENCE, THE FRUIT OF FAITH, in a very useful manner relates justification by faith to the fruits of justification in terms of the believer's life. This is useful to understand the right relationship between what God does for the believer and its consequence. There are valuable emphases in the aforesaid doctrinal statements. The following may be noted: (1) Simplicity in language and expression. Especially in the vernacular translations, this fact is borne out strikingly. (2) The assertion that salvation is God's act. It is God's good pleasure to save the people whom He has created. Redemption is therefore, is God's purposeful act for the sake of man. It is in this light that the Christian understanding of the incarnation can be best presented. What needs to be stressed in Incarnation as against the aims of vindicating dharma in Hindu thought is the redemptive plan of God for man which is achieved through the death and resurrection of Christ. (3) Salvation which restores fellowship with God takes place in the realm of man on the basis of forgiveness which means that God does not wait for man to be lifted up to the heights of divinity as in the Hindu ideal of self-realization but condescends to the human level, and meets man in his sinful situation. (4) The insistence that faith is a gift of God. It needs to be stated in very clear terms that faith is not a gradual climbing up through the effort of man for self-elevation. It is neither a merit nor a process of human co-operation. Faith is not a means to an end. God has revealed Himself and has made Himself active in His redemptive purpose.

With reference to what is said under Christian love and obedience, the fruit of faith, the following may be noted. Sanctification is the fruit of faith. This is a very apt way of expressing the real meaning of sanctification. To use Luther's familiar metaphor, the right relation between justification and sanctification is that of a good tree bearing good fruits. Such an explanation guards against ideas of legalism or moralism. (2) It is also important that under this section it is pointed out that we are saved not through good works but to do good works. This shows that no amount of self-effort and moral excellence lays any foundation for man's redemption, but, on the other hand, the fact that man is redeemed by God's spontaneous act commits him to his neighbour in terms of meaningful service. The centre of a sanctified life is to be seen in terms of service and sacrifice.

JUSTIFICATION AND EVANGELISM

The task of interpreting the Christian gospel to a non-Christian world is indeed the concern of the Younger Churches and therefore the relevance of the doctrine of justification for evangelism must be seen in this context. Although the interest of comparative religion has to some extent kept this concern in the forefront, so far a real confrontation in the sense of meeting the needs of non-Christian religious experience and faith has not been made. The way whereby the religious aspirations of the non-Christian masses could be adequately and convincingly answered, keeping in view their own presuppositions and conditions, is yet to be made clear. The Christian Church in India is realizing in an increasing way the need to understand the depths of the Christian faith from the other-man's-faith point of view. The task of evangelism is not merely to proclaim the Christian dogma but to make it relevant to the religious need of the non-Christian.

There is a new demand made on the Christian Church because of this new situation caused by the resurgence of non-Christian faiths. Along with the national awakening there is at the same time a new sense of religious awakening and the religious foundations for national and cultural developments are dug deeper. Religion itself takes new forms accordingly. The Hindus are a tolerant people, but they expect the same tolerance from others too. The new challenge placed by Hinduism today is whether Christianity is a religion of tolerance or a life with a missionary task. Our concern in this situation is not to present Christianity as a religion with unique claims for itself, our concern rather is to present the Christian faith as a power unto salvation and this necessarily means helping the non-Christians to understand the Christian faith from the point of view of the Gospel and its obligation to proclaim to the world the Gospel. During pre-Independence days there was often the attitude that Christianity is a religion from the West, but in post-Independence times this is no serious difficulty. Today the non-Christian is willing to

accept Christianity as a religion as native to the soil as any other religion in India, but it is hard for him to understand why there should be propagation and conversion. The real answer to this lies in the need to show that the Gospel ceases to be the Gospel when it is not proclaimed. If the non-Christian can be helped to see this relation as at the root of the Christian faith we have gained much from the point of view of the relation of the doctrine of justification to evangelism.

The relevance of the doctrine of justification for preaching is understood when we see the centre of the gospel as God's initiative to seek the fallen man. The crux of the matter is that man, as he is, is not able to find any way of saving himself. He must cast himself on an agency outside himself. This part of the proclamation will be alien to Indian thought and Hindu thought in particular. Whatever particular school of thought we turn to Hinduism in general has a different anthropological foundation for its doctrine of salvation. Fundamentally there is in the Vedantic line of thought the conception of man as one who has potential qualities of the divine. It exists as a spark only, but it is a potential spark. To reach the highest limits of religious experience it is necessary to fan the spark so that it may glow, it may become a flame and finally the consuming fire when the soul is lost in the ultimate reality. To think of an outside agency helping man in this process of release is impossible, yea scandalous. When we take the Bhakthi line of thought, there again bhakthi does not point to a reality outside man, but is in actuality a potency within man and the only idea of a divine movement is when it is acceptable to God as a means to an end. The Christian Gospel stands or falls as we understand justification as God-centred or man-centred.

CONCLUSION

With all this our intention has been to stress that what is central in the doctrine of justification is always what God is and does with His people and only in the light of this divine revelation and redeeming action will the doctrine of justification serve to help us to the centre of our faith who is Christ. This doctrine has relevance and will continue to have a relevance for all and in all places and in all seasons if we understand and interpret the Christian message as the saving act of God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. The Christian message then is centred around the life—the life of God *for us, in us and through us* to the world. Such is the message contained in the preaching of justification. In Paul's words: 'It is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith . . . For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith, as it is written, "He who through faith is righteous shall live"' (Rom. 1, 16ff.).

The Office of the Deacon in the Church from the Time of the Apostles

W. B. MADDAN

I. THE ORIGIN OF THE DIACONATE

Although Christian tradition from Irenaeus onwards has held that the Seven appointed in Acts 6 for the service of the tables were the first deacons (a view embedded in the Liturgies of many Churches, including the Anglican), this view has not been universally accepted, and many find in the Seven the first presbyters. But among ancient documents, only the records of the Council in Trullo (Constantinople, A.D. 692) deny the liturgical functions of the deacon to the Seven.

Of those who support the traditional view, some are impressed by the outward similarity of the deacons' ministrations in serving tables with their liturgical ministry, as assistants to the bishop. Some have suggested that *diakonos* really means 'waiter'; others have referred it specially to his assistance to the bishop in liturgical functions. Fr. Thurston, in the Catholic Encyclopaedia, suggests that in the early Church the Agape was the primary charge of the deacons, and that this must have involved considerable management; their liturgical function would then have derived from this, by analogy. Fr. Leclercq, in the Dictionary of Christian Archaeology edited by Fr. Cabrol and himself, supposes that there were originally seven Hebrew deacons, and that they were balanced by the seven Greeks of Acts 6, to see that the Greeks got their fair share of the relief that was distributed.* He is very indignant at the suggestion that the Seven's duties were merely the looking after the distribution of relief: 'If', he says, 'you join those who accept the queer idea that the Seven were temporary hands, junior employees, and in a word, "chop-house-keepers", among whom one stays no longer than is necessary to climb up one rung of the administrative

*If this is so, it must have been early forgotten, as it is the number seven, based often expressly on Acts 6, that is mentioned as limiting the number of deacons in any local Church.

ladder, clearly they have nothing in common with the deacons honoured by St. Ignatius as practically the equals of the bishops and presbyters.' They must have had the duties of liturgical assistants to the apostles from early days: 'The distribution of food, the dispensing of alms, were the duties of the deacons, and by a very natural recollection of their original purpose, the care of the distribution of the Eucharist in church, and of carrying it to the sick was also allotted to them.'

The other view is that the origin of the diaconate is not specified in Acts, or elsewhere in the New Testament, but in the later books (Philippians, I Timothy), we find it taken for granted. In an article in the *Church Quarterly Review* for July, 1959, Fr. Barnabas Lindars, S.S.F., suggests that the first development after Pentecost was the institution of the presbyterate, the second rank of the hierarchy, and that this is what is recorded in Acts 6 (Though he is by no means the first to make this suggestion). This would be the logical continuation of the fact that there was already the order of apostles. He believes that the Sacred Ministry had a strong eschatological element, and was meant to be something that would continue in the Age to Come, when Christ would have his Council of Twelve: the councils of presbyters were to administer the local affairs of each Church, and from them, by apostolic ordinance, the monarchical episcopate arose. The deacons were the special functionaries of the laity, as were also others with charismatic ministries, prophets, healers, exorcists. These were people whose gifts fitted them for particular works in the Body of Christ, but who did not form special ranks in the Church's structure. Later on, he suggests, the deacons were included in the pattern of Holy Orders because of their important liturgical functions: and the tendency to elaboration made for minor orders for some of the others. Fr. Barnabas suggests that in the course of the development, an original eschatological reference in the ministry was lost, and that it was originally designed to foreshadow the future polity of the Kingdom of God. 'In the Kingdom of Heaven at the End of the Age, there is to be a polity of mutual indwelling in the one Christ, of which the proper temporal expression is the hierarchical structure of the Church.' He goes on to suggest that the recovery of this eschatological element in Christian thinking is necessary if we are to understand properly the ministry, and much else besides.

The idea of the deacon as the special representative of the laity seems to me to accord with a good deal of his work: the whole Body was priestly: the bishop (and later the presbyters) performed the functions of High Priest in the midst of the priestly Body, and certain members of the laity were appointed to assist in particular ways. The deacon's ambivalent position is clearly shown in the Orthodox Liturgies, where he both represents the celebrant to the people, giving them the necessary instruction for taking their part in the service, and also, in the name of the people, instructing the priest to perform certain acts.

One important feature which distinguishes the deacon from the minor functionaries is that he is ordained by the laying-on of hands by the bishop: this link with apostolic days may be taken as one indication that the diaconate is of apostolic institution (as indeed we gather implicitly from Philippians and I Timothy). For the minor orders, the outward act of the ordination is the delivery of an appropriate instrument: these are offices of human institution, and there is nothing specifically apostolic about them.

But whatever may have been the origin of the office, by the days of Ignatius of Antioch at the latest the diaconate was regarded as essential to the Church: and when it was necessary to smuggle a presbyter into the gaol to celebrate the Eucharist for those awaiting martyrdom, a deacon was smuggled in with him.

So much for the origin of the diaconate: the functions of the deacon, from the end of the first century at any rate, have been fairly clearly defined, though they have varied from time to time and from place to place; and to these we now turn.

II. THE DEACON IN THE EARLY CHURCH

(a) *During Divine Worship: (i) Liturgical*

1. It was the deacon's office to assist the bishop and presbyters in the service of the altar: the care of the Holy Table, and of the vessels, was in their hands. It was the deacon's work, e.g., to spread the linen cloth on the altar, a survival of which is found in the deacon's spreading of the corporal during the creed in a modern Roman High Mass.

2. It was the deacon's office to receive the offerings of the people, and to present them to the celebrant, and also to recite the names of those who had offered.

3. In some churches (principally in the West, where it became the deacon's privilege), the deacon sings the Holy Gospel at the Eucharist. The Gradual and other chants seem also to have been their proper sphere, though later other singers were appointed to perform these. In Russia up to the Revolution a good bass voice was the requirement of a deacon in a fashionable church. In the Latin Church, the deacon still sings the magnificent *Praeconium Paschale*, the blessing of the candle on Easter Eve. This may be a relic of his duties as lamp-lighter at the normal vigil service of Sunday, but in some places at any rate the bishop actually blessed the light. The *Praeconium Paschale* is a definite benediction.

4. They assisted the bishop or priest to administer the Sacred Elements, usually by administering the Chalice to the people, and also by taking the Sacrament to the sick (which was later done by acolytes).

As long as the bishop was the normal minister of the Eucharist the presbyters must have been liturgically less important than the deacons, who seem to have thought that because

they came directly under the bishop, they were superior to the presbyters, and they needed to be kept in their place: they had to be forbidden, for instance, to administer the Sacrament to a priest, or even to administer the Sacrament in the presence of a priest, without his leave (Council of Nicea, 325). Some deacons seem even to have taken upon themselves to consecrate the Eucharist, but this practice was strictly forbidden by the Council of Arles (South France, A.D. 314). The *Fermentum* was taken originally by the deacons (later by acolytes) to the other churches in the city from the bishop's Eucharist, and it may have been that it was the deacon himself who placed the fragment in the chalice at the daughter church.

5. In the case of Baptism, deacons were allowed to administer the Sacrament in country churches where they were in charge, as a matter of course, though the bishop's blessing of the candidate was needed for its consummation. In the case of solemn baptism, they had their proper functions, which included the instruction of catechumens, and they also went down into the water with the male candidates (deaconesses performing this office for the female).

6. It was the deacon's office to bid the prayers of the congregation,* and to give the necessary directions for standing, kneeling, etc. They were also responsible for the dismissal of those under discipline, the catechumens, and the faithful at the appropriate stages of the service.

7. Deacons were only allowed to preach with the authority and licence of the bishop. In some Churches, e.g. in France, they were allowed to read a homily in the absence of the priest.

(ii) Non-Liturgical

1. It was the deacons' job to regulate and direct men's conduct in service time. They had power to rebuke the irregular, and chastise them for indecent or unseemly behaviour, such as sitting in the wrong place, talking, sleeping, or laughing.

2. In the days of the persecution of the Church, it was the deacon's task to keep the door, and see that no one entered who should not do so.

3. Originally, the deacon did the work of all the inferior ministers, and only gradually were the sub-deacon, reader, etc., made into separate offices.

*It is to be noted that the deacons did not address God in the name of the people, which was reserved for the bishops and priests, but only the congregation, directing them what to pray about. It is a pity that in the Proposed Prayer Book of the C.I.P.B.C., the Litany in the Eucharist, which is presumably intended to be primarily diaconal, should have ignored this distinction, and be cast on the pattern of the Prayer Book Litany, which is of quite a different origin. In the C.S.I. Liturgy, the second form of the Litany conforms to the ancient diaconal pattern, while the first form is open to the same objection as the C.I.P.B.C.'s proposed form.

(b) *Outside Service Time : (i) Ordinary Routine*

1. The deacons were the bishop's sub-almoners, and the care of the aged and the sick, widows, etc., was particularly their province. But they must do everything with the bishop's knowledge, so that there could be no ground for an accusation that the bishop was neglecting the poor. Church finances were largely in their hands, and in churches which owned much property this was an important factor which often led to a bishop being succeeded by one of his deacons. They were also responsible for arranging burials, and some people have seen in the 'young men' who buried Ananias and Sapphira the forerunners of the later deacons.

2. They were to supervise the general character of the Church, and report misconduct to the bishop when they could not redress it themselves.

3. In some cases they acted as a bodyguard to the bishop.

(ii) *Exceptional Jurisdiction*

1. In the absence of the bishop and priest, a deacon was allowed to reconcile penitents *in articulo mortis*. But the experts are divided whether this reckoned as a sacramental absolution or not.

2. In some of the Greek churches, the deacons had authority to suspend the inferior clergy in case of need, in the absence of bishop and priest.

(iii) *At Councils*

1. Normally deacons attended their bishops at General Councils and acted as their scribes; sometimes at the bishop's behest, they acted as his mouthpiece. But they were inferior in status to the presbyters, standing, while these sat, and, while presbyters were at least occasionally allowed to vote, deacons never were, except as proxies for their bishops. The custom in East and West differed about the place of their votes being recorded: in the East, they voted in the place of the bishops whom they represented, in the West, after all the bishops had voted.

2. At provincial and consistorial synods, they were sometimes allowed to vote in their own names.

III. LATER DEVELOPMENTS

It is the opinion of Dom Gregory Dix that the atrophy of the diaconate as a real order in the church in the West begins from the period of the Council of Nicea, after which the deacon's functions in the Eucharist came to be regarded as purely ceremonial, to be performed by a priest in deacon's vestments if no deacon was available. The diaconate itself degenerated into a mere period of preparation for the priesthood. In the Roman Catholic

Church, at some stage which I have not been able to discover, the importance of the diaconate was further depressed by being conferred on students at the seminary, who then left it as priests. This seems to be the normal thing nowadays, though in monasteries and cathedrals, perhaps, deacons are to be found.

During the mediaeval period, there seems to be little evidence to go on: it appears that as the provision for the sick and the poor became more widespread, through Monasteries and specific Charities in Europe, the deacon's work in this respect grew less, and he remained only a liturgical minister, and a candidate for the priesthood. But there was some development in their liturgical functions (even if they were usually performed by priests in the West), as in the emergence of the Offertory Procession at Sarum, and the Great Entrance in the Orthodox Church.

IV. ANGLICAN PRACTICE

The Book of Common Prayer clearly regards the diaconate as normally merely a preliminary stage on the way to the Priesthood. His duties are laid down in the following passage taken from the Ordinal: 'It appertaineth to the Office of a Deacon, in the Church where he shall be appointed to serve, to assist the Priest in Divine Service, and specially when he ministereth the Holy Communion, and to help him in the distribution thereof, and to read holy Scriptures and Homilies in the Church; and to instruct the youth in the Catechism; in the absence of the Priest to baptize infants, and to preach, if he be admitted thereto by the Bishop. And furthermore, it is his Office, where provision is so made, to search for the sick, poor, and impotent people of the Parish, to intimate their estates, names, and places where they dwell, unto the Curate,* that by his exhortation they may be relieved with the alms of the Parishioners, or others.' They are remarkably close to the ancient duties mentioned in II (a) (i) 3, 4, 5, 7, and (ii) 1 above. Note that (unlike the Lay Reader!) he specially needs the bishop's licence if he is to preach.

Other functions (church finance, seating of the congregation and keeping order during services, and the care of the fabric) in England fell largely to churchwardens, who, like the deacons, are the bishop's officers.

V. OTHER REFORMED AND PROTESTANT CHURCHES

I quote from an article by Mr. J. M. Ross:

'Protestants who are not content that the diaconate should be simply a short step to the full ministry have appointed "deacons" for one or more of five functions:

*In the language of the Prayer Book, this word means the Rector or Vicar or Priest in Charge of the Parish, and not his assistant, as in modern use.

- (1) The care of the poor within the Christian community (this often has not given the deacons a worthwhile job) ;
- (2) The care of the poor and needy of all kinds in the community at large* (this has often been left to secular authorities or to agencies outside the Church) ;
- (3) The administration of the financial and material concerns of the local congregation ;
- (4) The general oversight of the local congregation ;
- (5) Distribution of the elements at the Holy Communion.'

These also have clear affinities with the duties of deacons in ancient times.

VI. ARCHDEACONS

Archdeacons of the present day hardly fall within the purview of this article, but are included here for the sake of completeness. They were originally deacons, and up to the tenth century they were always in deacon's orders, as they still are in the Eastern Church. There was a good deal of tension at times between them and the presbyters, over whom they claimed some sort of jurisdiction: ordination to the priesthood was regarded as a demotion. But it was sometimes used as a means of getting rid of a troublesome archdeacon. In the Roman Church, the institution of a Vicar-General in each Diocese reduced the importance of the Archdeacon, who now seems to be merely a functionary of the Cathedral. In the Eastern Church he still has a specially close relation to the bishop, and the Anglican Church has in many places preserved the Archdeacon in his mediaeval functions, though deprived of a good deal of his powers. As far as I know he is now always at least a priest in the Anglican Church.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

It seems then that we may trace three steps in the development of the Diaconate as we know it today in the Anglican Church ; they all need to be taken into account in considering what should be the position of the deacon in the Church of God in the future :

- (1) The loss of the eschatological element in the Church's thought about the whole ministry ;
- (2) The common practice in the West at least of using a priest to perform the deacon's liturgy in the Eucharist : and
- (3) The breaking of the deacon's musical monopoly which led to its being no longer regarded as a life-long office (Fr. Thurston).

*Earlier in the article he says: 'It came to be recognized that (certain Brethren) were supplying the kind of *diakonia* that the missing third order of the ministry ought to be doing—presenting the Gospel to the world, not by preaching and sacrament, but by acts of love, by education, and by service of all kinds to those in physical, moral, and spiritual need.'

Finally, let me quote from an article by Fr. John Bligh, S.J. :

‘ It seems best, therefore, to draw a sharp distinction between the status of deacon and the powers of the diaconate, and to say that the diaconate is essentially “ an eminent grade in the Church ” which makes its holder a fit person to exercise functions of a certain category, if his bishop sees good to authorize him to do so. The powers actually entrusted to deacons in different dioceses and at different times will then naturally depend upon local circumstances : where the supply of suitably trained candidates for the priesthood is abundant, the functions allotted to deacons will be slight, whereas in missionary countries where suitable candidates for the diaconate are more easily found than suitable priests, there might well be a notable amplification of the powers and activities of the diaconate.’

Principal authorities consulted : —

Bingham : Christian Antiquities. Bk. 2, Ch. 20.

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Five articles in *Theology* for November 1955 (from which the quotations from Mr. Ross and Fr. Bligh are taken).

(*This article has been prepared as a companion article to that by Rev. Canon L. L. Lancaster on ‘ the Theology of the Diaconate ’, which appeared in the October 1959 number of the Indian Journal of Theology.*)

‘ Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up in life. These are words by which the slanderers of the nature of the body, the impeachers of our flesh, are completely overthrown. We do not wish to cast aside the body, but corruption : not the flesh, but death. The body is one thing, corruption another : the body is one thing, death another. What is foreign to us is not the body but corruptibility.’

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM : On the Resurrection of the Dead

Peter's Fall—Backward and Forward

K. C. MATHEW

The fall of Peter is a popular theme of preachers. Some of the familiar reasons advanced for his fall are lack of prayer, following Jesus afar off, warming himself at the enemies' fire, etc. These reasons are not without some truth, but, according to this writer, they are the fruits of the root we find in Matthew 19-27. Here we find him reflecting an attitude to life which has not yet become out of date—an attitude of a typical modern man. This 'what do I get out of it' attitude to life set Peter on a dialectical descent into demonic depth—a situation in which the individual spirit is not related to God, is filled with a great emptiness.

The Fourth Gospel makes it abundantly clear that Peter followed Jesus knowing that He was the expected Messiah. His brother came to him and said that they had found the Messiah. Then he took Peter to Jesus. This shows that Peter had no doubt as to whom he was following. He shared the popular Jewish conception of Messiah—a view which gave the figurative description of the reign of Messiah in the Old Testament a temporal meaning and expected a Messiah who would come in the clouds of heaven as King of the Jewish nation, free them from the yoke of foreign domination, and restore the ancient religion and worship. Peter left everything and followed such a Messiah. His conception of the Kingdom was thoroughly this worldly. He expected Jesus to establish His Kingdom at any time. He was probably expecting a prominent place for himself in the coming Kingdom. But, when Jesus said that it was hard for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, all the castles Peter was building in the air concerning a materialistic Messianic Kingdom came crashing to the ground one after another (Matthew 19-27). Overcome by impatience, Peter, in his characteristic way, pushed himself ahead of the rest and said, 'We have left all and followed Thee. What then shall we have?' Jesus' answer was couched in such material terms that the surface meaning quieted down Peter for some time.

The whole question was revived on the way to Caesarea Philippi. Jesus said, 'Who do men say that I am?' They replied, 'John the Baptist, Elijah, prophet, etc.' Now he said, 'Who do *you* say that I am?' Peter answered, 'You are the Christ.' In spite of Jesus' appreciative comments on this answer, He knew

that Peter was still ignorant of the real meaning and purpose of the mission of Christ (the anointed). He still entertained the popular Jewish conception of Messiah. Jesus' subsequent remarks show that He did not want His disciples to follow Him any longer with false hopes. This accounts for His sudden introduction of a new element in His teaching. He plainly told them about the sufferings of His last days. He told them how He would be rejected by the elders and chief priests, be killed and rise again on the third day.

These words shattered Peter's hopes concerning the coming Kingdom. The impetuous Peter could not control his impatience. He called Jesus aside and rebuked Him. Jesus also was ready for a show-down. He rebuked Peter saying, 'Get behind me, Satan' (Matthew 16:23). Here we find Satan making a common cause with Peter. The crucial point of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness was concerning the nature of the Kingdom He should establish. Satan tempted Him at this point by suggesting that He should use His divine power to establish a kingdom where all will have enough to eat, drink, wear, etc. As long as Jesus occupied Himself with the building up of such a worldly Kingdom, Satan would leave Him alone and would, if necessary, lend Him a helping hand in this important mission. Jesus did not yield to this subtle temptation and returned victorious from the wilderness. The same Satan is back again with Jesus and uses Peter to tempt Him. It was to the Satan in Peter that Jesus said, 'Get thee behind me.' The subsequent life of Peter shows that he did not understand the real meaning of Jesus' rebuke. He decided to follow the Messiah of his own conception rather than the true suffering Messiah described to him by Jesus in plain words. This choice of Peter was the beginning of his dialectical descent into the demonic depth we have referred to earlier. From this day Jesus' eyes were steadfastly fixed on the cross and His life was a gradual spiritual ascent to the hill of Golgotha. Peter's eyes, on the other hand, were firmly fixed on the Messiah of popular expectation and his life may be paradoxically described as a progressive fleeing from Christ while he followed Him.

Peter's preoccupation with the establishment of a worldly kingdom blinded his eyes to spiritual values. In Gethsemane, when Jesus asked him to watch with Him in prayer, he could not keep awake because he did not understand the nature of Jesus' spiritual struggle and the place of prayer in it. His mind was open to receive only the things connected with a kingdom of physical might. He knew the value of a sword. Although he failed to pray for Jesus, he was ready to use his sword to save Jesus' life. But unwillingly he put his sword back into its sheath in obedience to the command of Jesus. It is easy to picture in one's mind the impatience with which Peter witnessed Jesus' calm submission to the enemies. Peter still entertained a faint hope that Jesus would manifest His power and overcome the enemies. It was with this hope that he followed Jesus afar off. Perhaps, he wanted to be

the first one to run up to Jesus and embrace Him at this miraculous moment. Every step He made in following Jesus became increasingly anxious. But nothing happened and he ended up in the courtyard of the high priest. A ray of hope still remained in him. He sat with the guards and warmed himself at the fire. His eyes were anxiously fixed on Jesus to see that miracle with which He would escape. But against his hope the situation was progressing from bad to worse. Hope gave way to despondency. Perhaps, he began to say to himself, if I had known this earlier I would not have wasted about three years in following Him. Now one of the maids of the high priest came along and said, 'You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus.' Peter's answer is a sort of double talk. He said, 'What do you mean? I don't know *this* Jesus.' Of course, Peter never followed a suffering Messiah. He followed the Messiah of popular expectation—a Messiah who would subdue all powers under his feet. Well, to make a long story short, Peter in quick succession denied Christ three times to three different people. Now the cock crowed the second time, and Jesus turned and looked at Peter. This look revived his *love* and passion for Christ. A sense of helplessness, shame and grief overpowered him. He went out and wept bitterly.

Was his weeping real repentance? It was his love of the world that led him to this act of shameful open denial of Christ—a counterpart of the inward denial we have already referred to. His attitude to the world still remained the same. He was sorry for what he did and not for what he was. This sort of weeping has a psychological value. It helps the mind to get rid of pent-up emotions, but a person emerges from it with his wrong attitude unchanged. Real repentance is not just for what one has done but also for what one is. Forgiveness of God and true peace follow only this kind of repentance. The subsequent actions of Peter show that his weeping was not true repentance. Even the Resurrection appearances of Christ failed to free Peter from the grip of his love of the world. The promises of a resurrected, *ghost-like* Christ could not satisfy a pragmatist like Peter. It seemed to him that even a Resurrected Christ was not going to establish the expected Kingdom. He decided to waste no more time in following such a Master. He said to his friends, 'I am going fishing.' His friends also wanted to go with him. Thus they all went fishing.

Peter and his friends fished for the whole night and got nothing. This *nothingness* Peter encountered for the whole night helped him to see himself better than any other time. Peter was highly self-confident. His life up to this point had been characterized by self-affirmation which resulted in self-defeat because self-affirmation carries within itself an implicit dialectic of contradiction. Self-affirmation achieves the negation of itself.¹ When

¹ *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. V, p. 816.

Peter said, 'I am going fishing,' he was making another self-affirmation. He was sure of success in fishing, although he had failed in following Jesus. But the whole night defeat and nothingness were staring him in his face. Peter began to experience an abysmal depth of emptiness within and without.

There is no depth to which man may fall where the grace of God cannot reach him. Jesus came and stood on the shore and said, 'Children, have you any fish?' They answered Him, 'No'. Jesus said, 'Cast the net on the right side of the boat.'² When they let down the net in obedience to the words of Jesus, they got their net full of fish. The great emptiness Peter was experiencing had a sobering influence on him. For the first time he saw Jesus in a different light. He saw how a word of Christ could accomplish in a moment what several of them could not have done for the whole night. He realized for the first time that greatness does not depend on size. He further realized that a word of Christ is much more powerful than the combined might of all in the Kingdom of his wishful thinking. This new understanding convicted him of his sin. 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord,'³ he cried. We feel that this controversial statement of Peter fits this context better than any other. A study of Peter's life will show that this confession could hardly have come out of him earlier. This self-discovery of Peter, that he was a sinful man, helped him to view all things from a better angle. His mind is now open to understand spiritual things and values. By the time Jesus put him the question, 'Lovest thou Me more than these things?', all his past life was before him in a new light. Jesus' question may be expanded as follows: One day I called you Peter; you responded by leaving all and following Me. But you are back at the old life again. Are you going to abandon Me? Do the old ties tug at your heart? Are they drawing you away from Me? Do you still love Me more than these things? Now, you have to decide between them and Me, in this old familiar place.⁴ By the time Jesus put the question to him the third time he realized the full implications of it. He is now quite penitent. He wept and his weeping was real repentance. He repented of what he was. His former *love* of Jesus was for what he could get from Him. Now he loved Jesus for what He was. He fell at His feet in utter gratitude. We do not mean it in the literal sense but in the spiritual sense. This *fall* of Peter at the feet of Jesus is his fall *forward*. This is complete surrender. Jesus said, 'If any man will follow Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.' Before this event Peter denied Christ and His cross. But now he denied his own self and placed his whole life unreservedly at the feet of Christ. From this day Peter's life is a dialectical ascent to the fullness of life. It progressed from victory

² John, 21:6.

³ Luke, 5:8b.

⁴ *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. VIII, p. 806.

to victory. Before long he became filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. By one sermon thousands were converted and added to the Church. Another day on his way to the temple he said to a lame man at the gate, 'I have no silver and gold, but I give you what I have: in the name of the Jesus of Nazareth, walk.' The man was immediately healed and walked.

What a change in Peter! Once he longed to possess the power of silver and gold. How happy is he now to say that he does not possess them and that he has something else in their place, namely, the power of the name of Jesus! To be filled with this power he had to empty himself of the love of silver and gold. He had to empty himself of his self-conceit. He had to become nothing. He had to fall from the height of his own greatness to the feet of Jesus. Here is a great paradoxical truth of the Christian life and power. Paul says, 'my strength is made perfect in weakness.'⁵ To become nothing is to have a new attitude to one's own life, namely, the attitude of 'poverty of spirit.' It is to feel that we *are* nothing and we *have* nothing. It is to fall at Jesus' feet in utter submission and absolute dependence.

This personal experience of dialectical descent into demonic depth (fall backward) and dialectical ascent to fullness of life (fall forward) gave Peter an amazing insight into human nature and destiny. In his first Epistle he says that the people who are unrelated to God are 'no people' and that those who are related to God through obedience to truth are 'God's people'⁶—people who have realized their true destiny. The former progressively wither away like grass and the latter are born anew to a 'living hope' and have an inheritance which is 'imperishable, undefiled and unfading.'⁷

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⁵ 2 Corinthians, 12:9.

⁶ 1 Peter, 2:10.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 1:4.

Some Thoughts on Revelation from the Epistle to the Romans

P. YOUNGER

We are living in an age in which Christianity can no longer pretend that it is the only actor on the religious stage. The church is now keenly aware of the seriousness with which claims to revelation are coming from those who continue to stand outside the Christian fold. These claims represent an inescapable challenge to the Christian church. This challenge is felt first of all by those who are primarily concerned with the mission of the church, who find it imperative to rethink the whole evangelistic task. But the challenge comes in an even more far-reaching form to the church's theological thought. These non-Christian claims to revelation force us to reopen the whole question of the nature of revelation, and particularly of the circle of questions which in a somewhat different context were associated with the problem of 'natural theology'.

The opening chapters of Paul's letter to the Romans comprise what has been recognized to be the crucial Biblical passage dealing with these questions. This is the passage which has been used to support and to reject the concept of natural theology and to determine the possible position of such a theology in the structure of a Christian idea of revelation. One would expect the Christian church to react to the challenge which now comes from non-Christian religion first of all with a clear exposition of this scripture passage. But it is precisely at this point that we find the church undecided and lacking a uniform theological approach to the problem. One is painfully aware of this lack of unity for instance when one glances at the great variety of interpretations even among the major representative Protestant theologians. While to some this passage appears to be an example of Paul building his arguments upon a form of natural theology, to others it represents an express denial of the validity of all religion.

How is one to sort out this tangle of different interpretations? I would suggest that for our purposes here we may see the way in which they fall into two groups depending on the basic epistemological approach to the problem. We have then what we may

call the 'Biblical' and the 'historical' approaches to interpretation. The 'Biblical approach' we may define as that which is characteristic of all those who begin with the postulate, in one form or another, that the Bible alone speaks to us of God's revelation. The 'historical approach', on the other hand, starts with the postulate that Paul's thought is to be understood in the terms of the theological heritage out of which he spoke.

The approach which we have taken the liberty to call 'Biblical' we see for instance in the works of men like Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, and Hendrick Kraemer. Barth's exposition of this passage is well known and has been ably developed into a thorough position with regard to non-Christian revelation by Hendrick Kraemer in his book *Religion and the Christian Faith*. Barth takes the whole section (1:16-3:20) as a single 'kerygmatic proclamation' and sees in it no evidence of any 'prior' or 'natural' revelations. It is simply a description of the mutual opposition that arises when God confronts man in the only revelation, which is Jesus Christ. From this point of view Jesus Christ stands not as the fulfilment of a natural knowledge of God, but precisely the opposite as the judgement that 'all religion is unbelief' (*A Shorter Commentary on Romans, Church Dogmatics 1, 2, pp. 250 ff.*).

We would be presumptuous to pretend to challenge the great theological system which Karl Barth has established. Nevertheless we would venture to suggest that Barth and others of the 'Biblical approach' are inevitably led into a dead end in their discussion of the idea of revelation. Their consistent assertion that exegesis of Holy Scripture can be the only source of knowledge has already put aside the whole realm of man's spiritual experience. This might at first sight seem to be a reasonable delineation of the Christian sources of knowledge. But along with this seemingly acceptable epistemological commitment it would seem that they have consciously or unconsciously gone on to limit the area of ontology as well and brushed aside the whole theological problem of the human consciousness. What we have then is the prior assumption of the static idea of consciousness which has been so characteristic of Western thought with its bent toward historical dynamism. As a result when they come to exegesis they are compelled to skip over and ultimately leave unintelligible the crucial idea of 'faith' which Paul puts at the heart of his message in Romans. We see then for instance how Barth is led on from his original postulate to the cutting away of all possible human elements in the revelational process, and eventually to his two conclusions that 'all religion is unbelief' and 'revelation is only the one way process of God confronting man in Jesus Christ.' One cannot help but think that these conclusions point to a reality much narrower and more restricting than Paul had in mind when he spoke of God's revelation.

When we come to look at the representatives of the 'historical approach' we seem to shift from the thought world of theology to that of the scientific study of religion. Some of these scholars for instance point to the close parallels between Romans 1 and Wisdom 13: 1-9 or Philo *de Monarch.* 34 ff. as evidence of the historically determined thought forms which Paul consciously or unconsciously uses in this passage. Others (particularly more recent scholars such as Alan Richardson in *An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament*) follow the lead of W. D. Davies in *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* where he traces Paul's thought back to his rabbinic teachers. Davies interprets Romans 1 in the light of the rabbinic doctrine of seven 'Noachian Commandments' which supposedly would refer back to a time before the Sinai law and the birth of Israel as a nation and so were to apply not only to the Israelite but to the 'stranger' and 'foreigner' as well. These Noachian commandments then may comprise a kind of 'natural religion' with which an Israelite could expect all men to comply. With such-like parallels serving as the key to interpretation, C. H. Dodd, who we may take as the best known representative of this 'historical approach', goes on to see this section (1: 18-3: 20) as a digression in which Paul makes use of the Stoic idea of a 'law of nature' (2: 14 and 15) and other accepted Greek ideas of conscience and a natural knowledge of God to bring self-condemnation on his hearers. He would see Paul then along with his contemporaries as recognizing the validity of this natural knowledge of God as a sufficient basis for ethical life and as a foundation for the proclamation of the Gospel.

The thing which the interpreters of the historical school tend to forget is that whether we have been able to trace Paul's thought to its Greek or its rabbinic roots we still have to go on to the theological task of interpretation. A theological work of the creative originality of Romans is not to be understood solely as a product of its environment. It would seem that the same philosophical process has taken place which we saw in the Biblical approach and that a seemingly reasonable epistemological approach has predetermined the limits of the ontological reality of revelation that they expect to find in the passage. In this case the approach through the historical study of thought forms was accompanied by the assumption that the truth to be discovered here would also have to be of the empirical order of realities. Hence we find in their exegesis that they identify Paul's mysterious idea of the revelation of the wrath of God with the purely natural law of retribution in the phenomenal world of moral relations. One cannot help but wonder if this is not much shallower than Paul's idea of revelation. If the Biblical approach cut off all human elements in the revelational process the historical approach has swung to the opposite extreme and reduced revelation to one of the phenomena of the human world of history and morality. In other words the historical interpreters end up by cutting off the divine elements in revelation.

So then we come back to the Epistle to the Romans itself. Our excursions into contemporary interpretation have left us with the sense that they are pointing to an idea of revelation much too narrow or much too shallow for Paul. We cannot hope to give a thorough exegesis of the passage here. But our hope would be that by attempting to dive into the inner mystery of Paul's idea itself we shall be able to make a few suggestions which will point toward a perspective in which Paul's idea of revelation might be better understood.

There are two basic questions which come to our mind in the light of the present non-Christian claims to revelation. The first is, 'Can there be revelation in non-Christian religions?' and the second 'What are the implications of this possibility for our understanding of the nature of revelation?' Logically the answer to the first grows out of the answer we give to the second, but chronologically they confront us in the order which we have given here, and we shall deal with them in that order. First of all then we must ask if Paul gives any hint as to the area in which revelation takes place.

Right from the beginning of the letter one can notice the breadth and expansiveness which characterizes Paul's mind as he sets himself to speak to the capital of the then known world. He is conscious of the fact that he has been commissioned to all the nations (1:5) and is thankful that the faith of the Romans is proclaimed in all the world (1:8). Anticipating the objections that are about to be raised by an imaginary Jewish representative in chapter 2 Paul is explicit that this 'power', or possibility of revelation, which he bears in the gospel is for Greek and barbarian (1:14), wise and foolish (1:14), Jew and Gentile (1:16). Having thus made clear that revelation shall know no national, nor intellectual, nor religious bounds we are not surprised when in chapter 2 Paul reacts vehemently against the Jewish claim that their religio-ethical structures of life were the most suitable for revelation.

Indeed Paul must be vehement at this point for such a claim represents a radical distortion and ultimate denial of his whole idea of revelation. Paul is not concerned with revelation as a body of religio-ethical ideas. Such forms and structures of life may at best serve as symbols or dogmas through which revelation takes place. But revelation itself is a spiritual process which takes place in any genuine communion of the divine and the human. Surely then there can be revelation in non-Christian religion as there can in other non-religious frames of mind. To confuse Christianity or any of the elements of Christianity such as the Bible or the church with revelation itself would be to repeat the Jewish error of confusing the symbol with the reality to which it points. What Paul is concerned for is that men should know that this spiritual process is now empowered (1:16) and made truly possible in the communion of the natural and spiritual natures in Jesus Christ. So we see then in the true embodiment

of revelation, Jesus Christ, not the rejection but rather the consummation and empowering of all other revelations which vaguely reflect this communion of the divine and the human.

But Paul had not been primarily concerned to show the breadth of the area in which revelation might take place. That problem had arisen as a rather irritating aside because the imaginary Jewish representative had begun to introduce limitations of his own. What Paul had really meant to do was to uncover the real nature of revelation by diving into the depths of his own experience and suggesting to the Romans some of the various shadings and colourings that had been there in the revelational beam of light. It cannot be our purpose to delineate the bounds or the categories of revelation but simply to discuss three of the colorations of this beam of light in the hope that they will suggest to us the true nature of revelation.

Paul begins then with the assertion that true revelation is first of all revelation of the *ὀργή* of God. This Greek term *ὀργή* is usually translated into English by the term 'wrath'. But the difficulty with using the term 'wrath' is that it over-emphasizes the idea of moral indignation that there is in the term *ὀργή* and leaves us with the idea of God in an 'angry mood' as if it were one of a number of the possible moods in interpersonal human relations. The more primary meaning of the term *ὀργή* is that of 'otherness'. A glance at the Rig Vedic pantheon or at other religious texts would reveal the fact that the idea of the 'otherness' of God has been known in ancient India and elsewhere. But perhaps in Israel the religious sense of the 'otherness' of God has received its fullest development. There we see on the one hand the idea of God as the *ruach* or wind which comes sweeping into the life of man only to move just as imperceptibly and uncontrollably away. Or we have on the other hand the awe-inspiring majesty of the one before whom Isaiah bows in his great vision in Isaiah 6. Paul here lets this Old Testament religious sense combine with the analogy which we can draw from the manifold experience of awe in everyday life to describe this experience of God as a revelational reality. That awareness which revelation brings then is first of all not of this natural order but something breaking into this order as an 'other'.

Here is the awareness before which all men stand as Abraham said 'as dust and ashes'. Before the awareness of God as *ὀργή* stands man as weak, fearful, and in one word sinful. This is the true nature of the experience of 'mysterium tremendum' which Rudolph Otto has so ably described in his book *The Idea of the Holy*. It is this implication of the light as it shines back on the religious subject which many imperfect revelations of the *ὀργή* of God have failed to grasp. But in a way that only Paul could do he lets this light shine, this awareness which is continually revealed (present tenses) as men meet Jesus Christ, he lets it shine

out into every corner of life. It shines on the religion and philosophy of the Greek (1:22) and the Jew (2:1 ff.) and on the resultant moral life of either people (1:26 ff. and 2:17 ff.). In every case we see in man again the 'dust and ashes' in a brokenness, a rottenness and increasingly multiplied sinfulness.

The first coloration that makes up this beam of revelational light then is that of the *ὁργή* of God and the corresponding awareness of the sinful creatureliness of man. It is then in the prayer of the publican 'be merciful to me a sinner', which has been repeated by Christians truly aware of the mystery of the deity ever since, that true revelational light begins to shine.

But there is a second colouring in this revelational process which may occasionally chronologically precede the first but which logically grows out of it. This second is the revelation of the *δικαιοσύνη* of God. This Greek term *δικαιοσύνη* is usually translated into English with the term 'righteousness'. But again we find the translation misleading for in modern usage we tend to associate the term righteousness with the moral characteristic of standing free from guilt. But exegetes are now generally agreed that the term *δικαιοσύνη* does not refer primarily to ethical standing but rather to the Hebrew concept of God as a warrior leading forth in 'saving activity'. The analogy of revelation then to which the term *δικαιοσύνη* points is distinctly not that of a being who is set before us in all his righteous splendour to be wondered at by the expectant audience. It is rather that of a dynamic purposiveness and process which is to be known as it is joined. To know the revelation of God as righteousness is to look within ourselves and to see that in Jesus Christ we have been joined in the creative saving activity of God in the midst of the world.

Thus far it may seem possible to identify the saving activity *ὁ δικαιοσύνη* of God with one of the number of ideas of the dialectical progress in history. Such an identification was very prominent of course in Israel's history and is always one aspect of this *δικαιοσύνη*. But the inner esoteric nature of this saving activity is seen when we turn to the corresponding human side of this revelational light which is seen in the term *πίστις*. Because the translations of this term as 'faith' or 'belief' have become part of everyday vocabulary we tend to forget that they refer to a purely spiritual reality and to a dimension of the human consciousness for which we have no adequate analogies in natural human life. Jesus seemed at times to point to the nature of this reality as being the opposite of doubt or fear and Paul from a somewhat different point of view as the opposite of works. Recently scholars have tried to define faith as 'a moment of passivity' in order to avoid the suggestion that there could be a frame of mind which would merit salvation through a right form of belief. But surely this characteristic of the Romans which is proclaimed in all the world (1:8), which is the only context in which the 'power unto salvation' is known (1:16), and which is the revealing of the saving activity of God is more dynamic, creative, and free than

'a moment of passivity'. If then we are to understand the true import of the term *πίστις* we must see it first of all as pointing to a new dimension of the human consciousness which is opened up by the spiritual process of revelation itself and secondly as the freedom and creative activity of the soul as it relates itself to the saving activity of God. (Here we would do well to borrow from the term *γνώσις* of the ancient theologian Clement of Alexandria or the term *jyāna* of the pundits of ancient India. These terms correspond to *πίστις* in symbolizing for their religious or philosophical systems the human understanding of its participation in the divine life, but have been able to preserve more clearly both the inner nature and the creative activity that were there in the original term *πίστις* but have been lost in our development of the idea of 'faith').

The second coloration of the revelational light then is that of the *δικαιοσύνη* of God and the corresponding human activity of faith. And so it is in all aspects of the creative activity of the soul as it participates in that saving activity of God that the divine and human commune and revelational light shines.

And finally there is a third colouring in the revelational process which we may refer to as the meeting of Spirit with spirit, the divine Spirit with the human spirit. Structurally this may be thought of as the basis of the other two but logically it comes as the final fulfilment which Paul leads up to by chapter 8. Again we have in the revelation of God as *πνεῦμα* a term which suggests analogies all the way from the animistic idea of spirits to the more modern idea of spirit as an aspect of the personality. But Paul here is building on the Old Testament idea of *רוח*, 'Ruach' could with equal validity be translated as 'wind', 'breath', 'the directive or inclined aspect of the human personality' or 'the directive or inclined aspect of the divine personality'. And so in a sense it could include the 'otherness' of God who rushed into human life as wind and the 'saving activity' of God as he manifested the directive purposing aspect of his personality. But the primary and significant import of this term *רוח* of God was not in its objective manifestation of God to Israel but in providing a subjective ground for the participation of man in the divine life. It is when the *רוח* of God filled a man, whether he be carpenter, warrior, king or prophet, that he began to *share* in the burden of the creative work and purpose of God. And so the revelation of God as *רוח* or Spirit then is a pointing as it were to a realm in which man shares a common life with God and as such the term suggests the subjective ground for the communion of the divine and human in revelation.

The corresponding human awareness of this light of revelation is seen in the rich description of 'life in the Spirit' which Paul gives us in Romans 8. We need only point to the way in which this experience of life in the Spirit is not other than our union with Christ and hence is a sharing of his perspective in

both its divine and human aspects. In the first instance then it is part of Christ's participation in the life of the divine trinity for it is here that we experience the Spirit within us crying through our nature unto the Father (vv. 15, 26). But the Christian idea of revelation is never simply an escape from the natural to the spiritual, or from this world to the beyond. And so in the second instance the life in the Spirit is part of Christ's participation in the natural human order for it is here that we also experience within us the groaning and travailing of the creation (vv. 18 ff.).

And so the final coloration that makes up this beam of revelational light is that of the Spirit of God and the corresponding life of the spirit of man. It is then in the Spirit's crying within our heart 'Abba Father' and in a consciousness and articulation of the groans of creation that lie within our being that the final stage in the revelational communion of the divine and human is seen.

As we mentioned at the beginning these claims to non-Christian revelation which now confront the Church come to her as a distinct challenge. What we would hope to suggest in this essay is that this challenge can represent at the same time a golden opportunity, an opportunity to rediscover the breadth and depth that there is in the process of revelation which Jesus Christ has opened up. If we are bound by the epistemological commitments of the 'Biblical approach' we may refuse to recognize both the challenge and the opportunity. On the other hand if we are bound by the commitments of the 'historical approach' we may be unable to recognize the transcendent realm to which these revelations point. But if we can afford to open our lives to these claims we may find in ideas such as the East's more flexible understanding of the human consciousness the insight through which the revelational process opened up in Jesus Christ shall be rediscovered. It is there in the hope that the divine-human communion be seen again in its proper balance that we shall once again sense the mysterious reality of 'sin' and begin to participate in the 'saving activity' through which alone we can know the 'life in the Spirit'.

'God gives us many things in which He Himself has no part. Being Himself self-existent, He gives us a beginning of existence. Being Himself exempt from want, He gives us nourishment. Himself always the same, He gives us growth. Himself immortal and exempt from old age, He gives us a happy old age, and a happy death.'

ST. CLEMENT: Stromata

United Theological College, Bangalore

1910—1960

GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

1960 is an important year for the Christian Church. It marks the 50th anniversary of the inauguration of the modern Ecumenical Movement with the International Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910. This year also marks the 50th anniversary of the starting of advanced theological training by the Protestant Churches in India. The founding of the United Theological College and the reorganization of the theological department of Serampore College for advanced theological studies took place in 1910. The United Theological College, having been founded a few months earlier, is the oldest graduate level Protestant theological college in India. From the beginning it has been a union institution, an excellent example of co-operation among the missionary organs of several churches. In sending his greetings to the College for its Golden Jubilee Celebrations, Dr. Visser t'Hooft of the World Council of Churches observes: 'It is significant that the United Theological College came into existence a few months before the modern ecumenical movement was born. This fact symbolizes how closely the life of the College and the life of the ecumenical movement are related to each other'.

A GREAT EXPERIMENT IN CO-OPERATION

The initiative for the founding of the College came from Dr. J. H. Wyckoff of the American Arcot Mission and Dr. James Duthie of the London Missionary Society. From the early years of the college it had the support of five important Mission Boards, namely the United Free Church of Scotland (now the Church of Scotland) Mission, Wesleyan Methodist (now Methodist Missionary) Society, the American Arcot Mission, the American Board and the London Missionary Society. During the early years the College also had the support of the Danish Church and Dr. L. P. Larsen of Denmark was the Principal of the College for many years. After the inauguration of the Church of South India the

two Anglican Missionary Societies, namely the C.M.S. and the S.P.G., have become participating Missions of the College. Now, the Danish Missionary Society and the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society also have come in as supporting bodies. The part played by the College in the Church Union Movement is well known. Many members of the Faculty and old students of the College took part in the Church Union conversations and negotiations. Even after the inauguration of the Church of South India the College continues as a United College and serves many churches outside the C.S.I. This provides the College a continued opportunity to serve the cause of Church Union. During recent years the College has also drawn students from outside India and Ceylon. Students have come from Iran, Thailand, Philippines, Germany, Northern Rhodesia, United Kingdom, Canada and the United States.

THE ALUMNI

All through the years of its history the College has stood for high standards of scholarship and devoted service for the growth and extension of the Church. Out of a total of 481 candidates so far trained in the College, 394 were trained for the ministry. 196 took the Serampore B.D. degree. Many of the old students of the College have distinguished themselves in the fields of theological scholarship, ecumenical leadership and special types of Christian work like Ashrams, Missions to Gypsies, Overseas Missions, Christian Literature, etc. as well as in the pastoral ministry.

TRAINING FOR LAYMEN

The College has been concerned with the mission of the laity and has been offering special one year courses for lay leaders. Plans are also being made for shorter courses for laymen. Another important contribution to the mission of the laity is the Y.M.C.A. Training School in the College.

A CENTRE OF HIGHER THEOLOGICAL LEARNING

But the primary purpose of a higher Theological College is not only to train the pastors and lay leaders of the Church, but to produce a community of scholars committed to the word of God who through their intellectual training as well as spiritual preparation will help the Church to break through the World's objections to Christ. Towards this end the College has been developing facilities for post-graduate studies. While celebrating its Golden Jubilee it seeks to equip itself for greater usefulness in the Church's Mission. New opportunities for improving the post-graduate department are opening up. The close co-operation with the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society is proving to be a great advantage. The decision of the Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies to move its library and headquarters to the College premises is also to be warmly welcomed.

The College is also fortunate in getting some outstanding scholars from abroad as Visiting Professors who have helped to strengthen the post-graduate department.

JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

The celebration of the Golden Jubilee year of the College was inaugurated by some special meetings at the College in January, 1960. On 23rd January there was a Public Meeting at which representatives of the supporting churches, old students, and representatives from sister theological institutions spoke conveying their greetings and good wishes. The main speaker was the Rev. Dr. Erik Neilsen of the Danish Missionary Society. He spoke on 'The Church of the Wayfarers'. On Sunday, the 24th, a Thanksgiving Service was held at which the preacher was the Rev. W. Stewart of Serampore College. In honour of the Golden Jubilee of the College the Serampore Senate met in Bangalore and held their Convocation also at the College on 30th January.

GOLDEN JUBILEE PROFESSORSHIP

To mark the Golden Jubilee it has been decided that enough funds be raised in India and Ceylon to support one full-time professor at the College. The College is appealing to the churches in India and Ceylon and also to individual friends of the College to send regular annual contributions towards this purpose.

JUBILEE SOUVENIR

A souvenir volume has been published in connection with the celebrations. This contains some valuable articles on the History of Theological Education, History of Theological Training in India, the History of the College and other related themes by eminent Christian leaders like Bishop Stephen Neill, Dr. M. H. Harrison, Dr. P. D. Devanandan, Bishop A. M. Hollis and others. The articles are of interest not only for those associated with the College but also for the general Christian reader. It is our hope that the book will be widely circulated throughout India and Ceylon. Copies can be had from the Principal, United Theological College, 17 Miller's Road, Bangalore 1 (Rs.3/50 per copy).

'Jesus is at all times assailed by false witnesses, and while wickedness remains in the world is ever exposed to accusation. And yet even now He continues silent before these things, and makes no audible answer, but places His defence in the lives of His genuine disciples.'

ORIGEN

Book Reviews

The Dravida Kazhagam : by Dr. P. D. Devanandan. Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, Bangalore, 1959. Pp. 30. 75nP.

This is one of the pamphlets which the C.I.S.R.S., Bangalore, has been issuing from time to time, embodying the results of its study of contemporary trends in the life of this country. *Living Hinduism, The Gospel and the Hindu Intellectual, Ramakrishna Movement*, are others of their recent pamphlets.

The Dravida Kazhagam, the subject of this pamphlet under review, is, as its sub-title puts it, basically and mainly a revolt against Brahminism. One wonders if the movement can be considered, in any sense, a permanent feature of the public life in the Madras State. A revolt can only be of purely local and temporary interest and value.

This however does not preclude its being studied as a sign of the times and for what it has been able to accomplish. This booklet after giving a full history of the origins and developments of the movement describes its activities and evaluates it from the political, economical and cultural points of view. The movement has indeed 'created a sense of self-respect and confidence in many lower caste non-Brahman people, especially youth'; and has led its members to defy many of the social conventions by which they had been bound before. It is a spontaneous movement of thought and action among a large section of South Indian Society and has already radically affected their outlook and modes of life. It has become the champion of the cause of the poorer classes of society. It has resisted the economic, linguistic and cultural exploitation of the South by the North.

A movement like this was necessary to rouse the common people and to act as a check to certain tendencies towards widespread social and religious authoritarianism which have been in vogue for centuries in our country and which have been manifesting themselves in more modern forms in recent years.

But even so, a socio-political anti-religious movement is not a legitimate way of changing traditional opinions or opposing undesirable tendencies. Such movements, by their very nature, do not go far and deep enough. The root cause of all social maladies, of political dictatorship, of class domination, of the exploitation of people by people, is, as will be readily admitted, spiritual. Man's inhumanity to man is the poison that has infected human life. It is the spirit of man that is diseased. The remedy

must therefore be spiritual. What we need in India is not a movement which spreads hatred against any class of people or any social system, but a movement which will draw people together in mutual love and respect. Of course people do not readily give up age-old social importance and intellectual eminence. It needs a struggle to upset systems which have become corrupt and traditions which have outlived their usefulness.

A movement which, even though it does not openly proclaim itself to be atheistic, does proclaim that all religion is unnecessary, irrelevant and irrational, and urges people 'to confine themselves to the realities of this life' cannot claim or receive sympathy and support from any one who is convinced that 'behind the ebb and flow of things temporal stand the eternal realities'. Unless the age-long religious quest of the human race is considered to have been totally misguided and unless all revealed religion is to be considered a hoax, it is criminal folly to try to persuade people that they need not concern themselves with anything which is not material. It is not realism, but rank self-deception to think that nothing matters except that we must improve our economic and social status and oust the Brahman from his pedestal, and if possible climb it ourselves. It is as a temporary agitation compelling attention to the matter that the movement may perhaps be justified. But in the present context in this country one feels that the movement is pursuing a wrong method.

The interest of Christians in the movement must mainly lie in the challenge it offers to them. It is seeking to detract people from religion and to put rationalism in its place. Ingersoll is said to be favourite reading for its members! We have come to a poor pass if we have—for whatever purpose—to resort to a long outmoded rationalism in order to divert the attention of people from religion. The movement is dissuading certain classes who were gaining social and economic advantages by becoming Christians from considering the spiritual claims of Christianity. It also puts Christians in South India, who are still prone to observe and keep caste, to shame by its insistence on a casteless society. If the eradication of caste, the uplift of the lower classes economically and socially and above all spiritually, and the presentation of the Gospel of Love to the less privileged classes had been carried out properly by the Christian agencies, both Indian and foreign which have been at work in this country these last 250 years, there would have been no room for a movement of this kind.

That it has come into being is a challenge to Christianity in this country.

Madras

RAJAI AH D. PAUL

Corpus Christi: by Geddes MacGregor. Macmillan, 1959. Pp 302. Price 30s.

Those who lay seriously to heart the unhappy divisions of Christendom and who long for the unity of all Christian people

are aware of the deep-seated problems which stand in the way of Church unity. The Faith and Order movement within the World Council of Churches has focused these problems, and, by the very name it bears, has suggested that they lie largely in the realm of doctrine and Church polity. It is, of course, true that non-theological and non-ecclesiastical factors create no little difficulty ; but to those who realize that the King's business demands not only haste but a sense of priorities, have limited their concerns to the problems of theology and ecclesiology.

It may be said with fair conviction that in matter of 'Faith' not many serious barriers remain, apart from the rather formidable cleavage between fundamentalism and non-fundamentalism. They remain, however, in the realm of 'Order'. This has become obvious from the way in which reactions to the Church Union movement in India have been recorded from churches which do not separate polity from doctrine. It has also become clear that these problems arise from the different points of view on the Nature of the Church with which the conceptions of the Ministry within the Church are indissolubly bound up. The most serious controversy has arisen in connection with Episcopal status and function within the Ministry of the Church. Much has been recently said and written on the question whether Episcopacy constitutes the *esse*, *bene esse* or *plene esse* of the Church. But this debate is confined largely to the Anglican Communion in which varying emphases are laid on the meaning and status of the Bishop. Among the 'nonconformist' churches the problem is limited to discussing whether we should or should not do without Bishops. It is with Presbyterianism that the churches, which believe in historic episcopate, have to come to terms not concerning whether or not Bishops are needed, but what it is that constitutes the episcopal function. Whatever the usefulness of Bishops may be in the Church, does the essence of episcopacy consist in a person or in the function performed by the presbytery (presbyters and elders) who safeguard the faith and maintain the continuity of the Church's life and witness ?

It is obvious that the New Testament gives no clear answer to this question, and therefore any solution on the basis of Biblical evidence is wellnigh impossible. The solution obviously lies in synthesis rather than anti-thesis, in the principle of comprehension rather than absorption. It is in helping this process that a book like the one under review is so helpful.

The book is written by a scholar of repute and author of several books, among them being *The Aesthetic Experience in Religion*. The essay is a careful and well-documented study of 'the Nature of the Church according to the Reformed Tradition'. The survey covers the Mediaeval period as well as the Reformation and Post-Reformation periods with special emphasis upon the entry and continuance of Presbyterianism in Scotland, the author himself being a member of the Church of Scotland. In making the study the author has tried to state the Lutheran, Anglican

Separatist and Reformed positions in regard to the doctrine of the Church, laying especial emphasis on the related doctrines of the Ministry and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist. While inevitably supporting his own point of view, he has been quite fair in stating the positions of other Churches. The book has been written to further the cause of conversations between the Anglican and Presbyterian Churches which have been going on for some time. It is good that it has come out at a time when consequent upon the Lambeth Conference 1958 the conversations have been in the danger of breaking down. It is a book for scholars and will require real determination on the part of a general reader to go through it.

I am afraid this note is more in the nature of emphasizing the importance of the book than detailed comments on its contents.

Cathedral House
Nagpur

JOHN NAGPUR

Sandals at the Mosque: by Kenneth Cragg. (S.C.M. Press).
12s. 6d.

This small but timely book by Dr. Cragg is a sequel to his larger work, *The Call of the Minaret*, in which he set out his Christian understanding of Islam, based on his meditations on the Muslim call to prayer. In *Sandals at the Mosque*, the author gives the same evidence of his sympathetic and appreciative understanding of a typical Friday sermon given in a mosque, where people take off their shoes on entering to worship and to hear the word of God. Confessedly, Dr. Cragg, with a deep spiritual insight, sees more in the sermon than perhaps many, whether Christian or Muslim, would normally see. But he is a theologian-artist, and as such it is his endeavour to make people see the true beauty which is missed by ordinary eyes. His plea is that if (metaphorically speaking) we take off our shoes at the mosque and enter in to get a feel of the true fervour of true Muslim worship and the sincerity of the devotional exhortation, we would learn many spiritual lessons for our edification and for our evangelistic task. 'That the shoes of the Christian student mingle with those of the Muslim worshipper is no more than a sign of our human alongsidedness.' Dr. Cragg shows that only in our appreciation and our realization of this 'alongsidedness' can Christians understand the mind of Muslims for a relevant and effective preaching of the Gospel to them.

He points out that there are temptations to be guarded against in our thus entering the wilderness of Islam, lest technological stones be substituted for the bread of life. Christ cannot be compromised, but He condescends. He is the 'Word made flesh'. Therefore the incarnational approach to Islam is of the utmost importance, if the Gospel is to be effectively preached and not dogmatically asserted. He shows how much there is in such

Muslim doctrines as 'shirk', which is illuminative to the understanding of our own religion and relevant to the needs of the world today. Similarly the Muslim emphasis on God's sovereignty is something which must be captured from and for Islam for the good of all, and for the salvation of the world in peace.

These two books of Dr. Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret* and *Sandals at the Mosque*, are prophetically relevant to the Church's life and to its evangelistic task today. They deserve a very careful and unprejudiced reading by all Christians. A very useful word-list of Islamic terms is appended for the benefit of the general reader.

Henry Martyn School of Islamics,
Aligarh

EMMANUEL SADIQ

The Christian Family: by Leslie and Winifred Brown. (World Christian Books No. 29). Lutterworth Press, London. 1959. Pp. 80. Rs.2/03.

This is a little book of homely wisdom and practical advice about the meaning and place, problems and opportunities of the family in the Church. Written together by a husband and wife, with a background of Christian service in many lands and societies, it is a suitable manual to put into the hands of all those in the Church who feel that the family today is not all that it ought to be and can be.

There is a discussion of the history of the word 'family' in English at the beginning of the book, but very soon we get into the real origin of the institution in creation and the need of trust, forgiveness and understanding for the realization of the true ends of family existence. The book tries to clear up some of the common misconceptions about sex and touches on the ethical problem of pleasure, but always brings the reader to the central point that the source of meaning and value in human life is in God and all facts and relationships have to be understood and explained in relation to Him.

The varied and difficult problems that face a Christian family in the difficult and unstable conditions of the modern world are squarely faced and constructive suggestions about making the Christian character of the home more real are provided. As the authors reveal familiarity with, and draw illustrations from various areas and ecclesiastical groups, the book is a genuinely ecumenical work on the Christian family.

This book is one of the signs of an increasing recognition of the need of greater understanding of the meaning of personal relations, and it is to be hoped that it will help the average member of the Church to share in that concern, and to participate intelligently in meeting the challenges that the Christian faces in this area of life.

Serampore College

M. P. JOHN

A Good Minister of Jesus Christ : by J. Gordon Jones. (Baptist Mission Press, 41a Lower Circular Road, Calcutta 16). Pp. 55. Rs.1/75.

This booklet contains a series of addresses delivered by the Revd. Dr. Gordon Jones to the students of theology in Serampore College. He was invited as a special lecturer in pastoralia. His purpose in the lectures was to paint a portrait of the great Apostle as a minister of Jesus Christ. He has well succeeded in this attempt, and in drawing lessons from the picture thus developed for a minister of the Lord.

Generally St. Paul has been known as an evangelist : and it is interesting to know that he was a model minister, shepherding and feeding his flocks as well. All the different aspects of a minister's work are to be found here : preaching, witnessing, counseling, interceding. And all the qualities of a Christian teacher, as theologian, exegete, polemicist. The Apostle of the Gentiles had these in ample measure. The secret of his astounding personality as a model Christian minister is discovered in the last chapter : his life in Christ.

This booklet should be read and studied by all those ministers of the Lord who want to be true to their calling and whose 'one increasing purpose' is to serve the Master. For though the Apostle lived twenty centuries ago, his ministry is relevant today. Just as the Christ he served is the same yesterday, today and for ever.

Serampore College

D. A. CHRISTADOSS

Golden Jubilee Souvenir of the United Theological College, Bangalore.

This Jubilee Souvenir published on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the United Theological College, Bangalore, is an attractive brochure, informative and interesting to read. The first two articles deal with theological training in the whole Church and contain notes on the history of Protestant theological training : they give a clear picture of the ways in which such training has been looked upon in the Church. The articles entitled 'The Earliest Years : A Slice of College History' and 'The First Fifty Years of the College' give a vivid description of the history of the College from small beginnings. Other articles deal with the Christian Ministry, the Unity of the Church, Y.M.C.A. Training and the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society. All these remind us how very fortunate the Bangalore Theological College is to be linked up with every aspect of the work of the Church in India today so very closely.

Principal Chandran is to be congratulated on getting such distinguished Bishops and Professors of Theology to contribute to this souvenir. They include Bishop Neill, Bishop Hollis, Bishop

Sumitra, Dr. Devanandan and 'The Bangalore Trio' of Harrison, Moulton and Ward. Many students of this College are holding very responsible positions in the Church in India as well as in the ecumenical movement. May the College go on under God's guidance for many more years of service.

B. M.

The Ecumenical Review (published by the World Council of Churches) for January 1960 contains an interesting series of articles on the Orthodox Church and the significance of the Eastern and Western traditions within Christendom. Most of these articles were originally written and delivered as papers for meetings of World Council of Churches' committees in Greece in 1959.

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—*The Guardian*, Madras

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